

2004/2005 Fire Lieutenant & Captain Examination INFORMATION SESSIONS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q *Where will the multiple-choice phase be given?*

A The multiple-choice test will be given at the Citywide Training Facility, 750 Piedmont Road for both ranks. The Lieutenant test is planned to occur in the large testing room at the north end of the building. The Captain test is scheduled to be in Room "D," which is just south of the large testing room.

Q *How do I get a copy/list of the bulletins that have been deleted from the test?*

A Go to the Civil Service website at www.csc.columbus.gov and click on "Fire Promotional Examinations," then click on "04 Bulletins not tested on Multiple-Choice" for the test for which you have applied.

Q *Are the deleted bulletins from Phase I only?*

A Primarily. For specific information on which bulletins will not be used, please refer to the "04 Bulletins not tested on Multiple-Choice" document on our website.

Q *Can you tell us what books will be tested during Phase I?*

A Lieutenant Phase I will test: SOPs, selected Systems Manual items, selected Bulletins, Fire Officer's Handbook of Tactics, Essentials of Firefighting, Building Construction in the Fire Service, and Fire Service Emergency Care (Chapters 1, 2, 4, & 7). Captain Phase I will test: SOPs, selected Systems Manual items, selected Bulletins, Fire Officer's Handbook of Tactics, and Collapse of Burning Buildings. For a listing of selected Bulletins and Systems Manual items visit our website at www.csc.columbus.gov.

Q *Why did you move the test up 2 months and add two new books to study from? You should have removed Brannigan, it is outdated.*

A The job analysis, including survey results and technical conferences with class incumbents and supervisors were used to determine the textbooks to be used. The test date was moved up to accommodate the introduction of a hurdle after Phase I of the examination.

Q *The reading list initially given for the Lieutenant and Captain exam did not include "Collapse of a Burning Building," is it now included?*

A The reading list for Captain initially contained and still contains "Collapse of a Burning Buildings." The reading list for Lieutenant did not initially, nor does it now contain "Collapse of Burning Buildings." The reading lists for each of these two ranks were and continue to be different.

Q *Answers to some questions come from more than one source, some sources give different answers to a question. Will questions cite the source in their question?*

A We are aware that some of the sources give conflicting information. Therefore, for the multiple-choice phase, at the beginning of each section we will state something like, "Questions 51 through 70 are derived from the source Fire Officer's Handbook of Tactics." We will do that for each source.

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- Q** *Why not provide us with copies of all the pertinent "Bulletins" that are being tested? We all should have our own copies of SOPs and manual, we can buy the one or more books on the reading list (or borrow), but for each to have set of bulletins (not attainable on-line at home – as I understand) is cumbersome at best while on duty at firehouse. (54 bulletins)*
- A** This was discussed during our first CIFA meeting in February. It was decided that the bulletins would be made available on the Website. These bulletins are obtainable on-line at home from the Commission's website at www.csc.columbus.gov.
- Q** *Why are questions allowed on a test from any source that directly contradicts what our SOPs system manual allows?*
- A** The multiple-choice test specifies which source the question is drawn from, the better candidates will know of such contradictions and be able to respond accordingly. As such, if such contradictions occur on the exam, such items may not be tossed out on appeal, they may still be valid items. Despite this, we do try to avoid including such contradictions in our tests, however sometimes such contradictions cannot be prevented.
- Q** *Will there be an equal number of questions from each source on the closed-book exam?*
- A** There is no guarantee that there will be an equal number of questions from each source. More items may come from some sources and fewer from other sources.
- Q** *Do SMEs look at book questions that apply to Columbus, not FDNY on multiple-choice?*
- A** SMEs/technical advisors review every multiple-choice question for the importance of the item content, the correctness of the keyed alternative, appropriateness for rank, and item consistency. We will not use questions that pertain specifically to FDNY.
- Q** *Will all closed-book questions specifically pertain to only one rank? (i.e. Will the captain candidates be asked questions relating to the task of an EMS officer or a Battalion Chief or a rank in the Police department?)*
- A** We ask the SMEs to review the items to help us determine if they are appropriate for the rank being tested. Therefore, we will not ask questions that pertain to another rank, unless that same question pertains to the rank being tested also. There may be some questions on the Lieutenant multiple-choice that are also on the Captain multiple-choice. It is not unusual for something like that to take place since those two ranks are so closely related.
- Q** *If this is tested knowledge and regulation reading which it is in order to pass the Journeyman test, then all firefighters should have this material and not have to go out and spend \$300 to get all the books needed to study. Why don't older firefighters hired 5 years or earlier get the same material, i.e., books bought by the city and division of fire as the newer firefighters? It seems as though there is an unfair advantage.*
- A** The concern is a matter that is neither negotiated nor controlled by the Commission, as such, we cannot address this concern.
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Q Can we use highlighter on Phase I & II to highlight important phrases?

A Yes, you may use highlighters to highlight information in the test booklets. However, highlighters will not be provided, you must bring your own.

Q Can we use erasable ink pens? If not, can we bring a small pencil sharpener that does not make noise and is about the size of a quarter?

A Erasable pens may not be used on any phase of the examination. These pens have a tendency to smear and may cause answers to become smudged/unreadable resulting in lost points on the exam. Yes, you may bring a small pencil sharpener as described in the question. Also, if you need a fresh pencil at any time during the exam raise you hand and a monitor will give you a fresh pencil.

Q How can you monitor the amount of excess writing/notes that are placed in books?

A You are permitted to have writing/notes written in the margins of your sources for use during the open book exams, however no extra note pages or additional pages are permitted in your sources. Commission staff reserves the right to search sources and confiscate any excess page(s).

Q Will the Abbreviated Forms Manual only contain forms to be tested?

A There may be additional instructions for forms that are not on the test in the Abbreviated Forms Manual.

Q Old RL 104?

A We will use current forms on the exam.

Q Are all abbreviations going to be accepted, or only the ones in the example?

A Use abbreviations as instructed in the Forms Manual.

Q On Phase II can the forms be separated from each other and from the story page?

A On test day, materials that are stapled together are to remain stapled together.

Q Will NIFRS be used on Phase II? We are currently in the process of migration to electronic fire reporting (implementation to begin 1/1/05)?

A The NFIRS is not on the reading list and will not be on the exam.

Q While studying for the written work sample; how can we determine specifically what the SMES will grade as the correct response for an item that is not clearly answered in the forms manual?

A On the answer key we will avoid grading things that are not clearly answered in the sources. However, obvious answers that are not specifically stated in the sources will be scored.

Q Is Phase II just going to be on Division forms, will there be a building inspection?

A Any information/forms in the Forms Manual could be included on the test.

Q Will points be taken away for wrong answers given on Phase II?

A The answer key may give points for leaving things blank that should not be completed. For example, if it is incorrect for a specific form to be completed, the key could award points for leaving the form blank.

Q *For the tactical, are we required to identify specific tasks of each member and task of company and crew? If there are 12 firefighters on the scene, do we have to give them all a job?*

A In order for Civil Service to be able to grade that you are aware of the functions that need to be done, you must write them down. The better candidate will utilize all their resources, including manpower, by ensuring that the functions are delegated without going into great detail about each specific task. Not everything can take place in the short amount of time that you have to give your response, but you can ensure that certain duties are to be taken care of at some point during the course of a particular emergency. Also, not every candidate is going to utilize manpower the same way. That is fine, as long as certain things are taking place within the limitations identified in the scenario.

Q *On the tactical, will you also be scored on what order you list operations or just that you have the key answers listed?*

A It does not matter in what order the operations are listed. We are not going to make you waste time by erasing an entire page of information just because it is not listed in the order in which it would actually be done at an emergency. Conversely, if you write down, "The first thing I would do is..." and it is not the first thing you should do, then that would be counted against you. In addition, if the question asks you to provide a "rundown" and you did not identify required information in the "rundown," but you provide it later in response to another question you would not receive the points or this information in the rundown.

Q *Is there a five-minute time limit per tactical exercise or longer for more complex incidents?*

A Some scenarios may be longer than five minutes and some may be shorter. That all depends on the complexity of the answer for which we are looking. Although some emergency scenes may be more complex to handle on the job, it doesn't mean it will take a long time to write your response(s) to the question(s).

Q *On the tactical, Narrative vs. Bullet Points?*

A You can write your responses in narrative, bullet points, outline, etc., as long as we can read and understand your responses.

Q *Are acronyms from the source material accepted on the tactical?*

A If the SMEs says that a particular acronym is appropriate and it is something that is supported by the source material, then it will be acceptable. However, if you are unsure of a particular acronym and the possibility of getting it wrong is in question, then it would be in your best interest to write the string of words out longhand.

Q *On the tactical, are we to assume command? If the question states "After the initial rundown," do we omit giving a rundown or do we give a rundown?*

A Specific instructions as to what role you are to assume will be given in the scenario. It may be for you to assume the role of the first arriving officer on the scene, or it may be for you to assume some other role. Whatever the case, you will be given specific information in the video scenario. You do not have to give a rundown unless the question asks for you to give a rundown. You will not be marked wrong if you do give a rundown, but you could be wasting valuable time by doing that when it is not necessary.

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- Q** *Sample tactical exercise, if this is an example, then this is not according to CFD operations – and the score sheet does not match the questions. The question should be: After the initial run down, what are your immediate actions and the immediate actions of your crew? Then answers key 1 thru 6 could be answered. Question 2 would be: what is the initial action of the remaining companies responding? Then 6, 8, 9 and 11 would be the answer. On this scenario many of these are done without orders from the officer, especially 10. Finally, according to our SOPs, with a 3 man crew, the officer would pass command and only do 1 thru 5 and 7.*
- A** The example provided during the information sessions, could very well be the way the question is asked on the test. We provided an example of these questions, and what answers would be keyed if such questions are asked. We did discuss this with the SMEs, and we may still ask such questions and expect such responses. When fire personnel become incident commanders they are responsible for what occurs on the scene, the better incident commander will not just assume everyone is doing what is required in the SOPs. This test is designed to find out if candidates possess the knowledge, from the SOPs, the textbooks, etc., to appropriately respond.
- Q** *Will points be taken away for wrong answer given on the tactical?*
- A** You will not receive negative points for a wrong answer. However, if other candidates wrote the correct answer while you gave the wrong answer, they will get full credit for their answer and will receive points, and you will receive no points for the wrong answer.
- Q** *In what rooms will the oral boards be given?*
- A** The oral boards will also be given at the Citywide Training Facility, 750 Piedmont Road for both ranks. This test will take place in the Civil Service oral board suites that have been designed specifically for that purpose.
- Q** *What would be an example of a “structured interview?”*
- A** Normally, structured interviews contain the same set of questions given in the same sequence for each candidate interviewed. These questions usually tap into critical aspects of the job. During the preparation period, candidates will be given a scenario to review. Candidates may or may not receive a list of the questions that will be asked during the exercise. When candidates receive a list of questions during the preparation period there is still the possibility that they may be asked a follow-up question or questions that are not provided ahead of time. Once candidates are in the live oral board, candidates are asked the list of questions. Candidates are rated based upon their presentation and responses to the questions.
- Q** *Was there a group or standard that was being used for oral board abbreviation?*
- A** This question referred to the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales or BARS. Each of the four oral board dimensions has groups of behaviors or actions that are associated with them. Each dimension is scored according to a 1 to 9 rating scale with 9 being the highest score in each dimension.
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Q *Will 6 raters be in the room while the candidate is testing, or will second set of raters watch a video of the candidate? How will the rater's input be weighted?*

A There will be three raters in each of the two live oral boards, therefore three raters will be in a room during each exercise. In addition, six raters will assess each candidate during their live presentations. Candidates' videotaped responses will also be assessed, three raters will assess the 1st exercise and three will assess the 2nd exercise. In all, each candidate will receive twelve assessments on the oral board phase of the exam. Raters' assessments will not be weighted.

Q *In Phase IV will there be (3) role-playing raters and (3) raters just watching? Are the role-players raters?*

A There will only be three raters in each live board and all of those raters will assess each candidate regardless of whether they are playing a role or not. Role-play exercises may have one, two, or three role-players depending on the exercise.

Q *Will every candidate have a role-play and a structured interview or will some have 2 role-plays, some have 2 structured interviews, or some have one of each? Will it be consistent for everyone?*

A Every candidate will get the same 2 exercises. The exercises could be any combination of 2 role-plays, 2 structured interviews, or 1 of each. The exercises may or may not have one or more follow-up question(s). Yes, the instructions, exercises, questions, and raters will be the same for everyone.

Q *Why does the Bald Headed "Brother" talk down to us like we are kids? He is very condescending.*

A For many individuals, this is their first time taking a promotional exam and we (Civil Service) are providing quite a bit of information that may be foreign to them. The worst thing we can do to those individuals, who may be very nervous about taking a test, is present the information in such a manner that is very confusing to the candidates. This may cause those candidates to become very discouraged with the testing process. Therefore, we try to make the information as simple as possible. Also, not everyone receives information the same way. We try to formulate and present the information in such a manner that everyone can gain an understanding of the process.

Q *How many candidates applied for each Rank?*

A 456 Lieutenant Candidates; 124 Captain Candidates

Q *Will there be more information sessions for each phase of the exam?*

A There will be no more information sessions. Information for the entire test was given during the sessions held October 18, 19, and 20.

Q *I understand that the CSC has tried to solve the problem with giving a solid date for applicants eligible to take the test, but even though we are “Home Rule” or “Charter City” we should not lower the standards. Ohio Revised Code 124.45 states, 12 months in rank prior to test. With trying to solve the date for eligible candidates, we have lowered the standards. CSC needs to look at this again; Why would we not follow the ORC? Why would we lower the standard? Please look at the ORC 124.45, even though we are a Charter City. Please use it as a reference.*

A Because we are a Charter City and have collective bargaining agreement with the IAFF, Local 67, we do not follow the ORC for such standards. Even with the recent minimum qualification change, captain through assistant chief candidates **must still** have completed one year (five years for lieutenant candidates) in their current class in order to be eligible for promotion. So, in both scenarios, candidates would have at least one year in rank before being eligible for promotion, so there is no “lowering” of the standard.

Q *Why is the information session so late in the game? This should be put out as soon as possible.*

A The information sessions were provided approximately two months prior to the multiple-choice phase, three months in advance of the Phases II and III, and six months in advance of the oral board phase. In addition, the reading list was provided in July, and study guides were provided during filing in September. This should be ample time for adequate test preparation.

Q *Where is it stated that we cannot see our exam from previous administrations?*

A Civil Service Commission Rule XIX(A) and Rule XIII(F) . The Commission Rules are available to the public by visiting our website at www.csc.columbus.gov.

Q *Do you consider working in a group (study group) prior to the test “cheating?” (i.e. group studying for Phase IV)*

A No, assuming you are not participating with a subject matter expert/technical advisor for the examination you are taking. The Commission encourages you to participate in study groups.

Q *Is the test going to start on time, even if we have bad weather?*

A Based upon Civil Service Commission policy the lead analyst may determine whether to begin the exam instructions late due to unforeseen events.

Q *Please make it cool in the room, not as HOT as it is now.*

A We have little control over the temperature at Piedmont. The city is in the process of purchasing an air handler to deal with the concerns related to temperature; however, this will likely not come in until spring of next year at the earliest. The temperature often fluctuates from day to day, some days too hot, others too cold. Commission staff recommends that you dress in layers and be prepared for temperature fluctuations.

Q *If a member forgets his or her ID and Civil Service team member knows this person, will that candidate be allowed in?*

A Any candidate who does not bring a picture ID will be handled the same. Commission policy states, "If the candidate does not have proper picture identification, have the candidate complete a Conditional Admission Sheet (E-14). The signature taken at the test site can later be used to verify the identity of the candidate. Inform the candidate of the date by which identification must be verified as well as the location. The staff member who later verifies the identification should compare the signature provided by the candidate at the test site with the identification provided."

Q *On what part of the test is the source material allowed to be used?*

A The open-book phases: the writing sample and the oral board.

Q *How many questions for each phase?*

A About 100 for the multiple-choice phase. For this phase and the other phases the exact number is yet to be determined.

Q *There is a good time spacing between Phase I and II, and between Phase III and IV, why is there on 2 days between Phase II and III?*

A The time space between Phases I and II are to allow for the complete grading of Phase I prior to the administration of Phase II. The time space between the Phases III and IV are to allow for the complete grading of Phase III prior to the administration of Phase IV.

Q *On the hurdling for Phase II and III is it a combination of part I, II, and III scores, or is it just your performance on part II and III?*

A There is a hurdle based upon just Phase I of the exam. There is another hurdle based upon just Phase III of the exam. Phases II and IV are not hurdled.

Q *What is the cut-off for each phase?*

A The hurdle for Phase I will be based upon a score of approximately ½ standard deviation below the mean, which will equate to a raw score in which everyone who achieves this score or better will pass this phase. The second hurdle, Phase III, will be based upon a raw score which will be determined by the number of candidates permitted to go on to Phase IV.

Q *Why is Phase II not being used as a cut-off score, since it counts for 25% of the score?*

A Phase I is a hurdle because it provides a good assessment of the knowledge that is needed on the job and the cut will be made, such that no one will be cut that would have finished in a promotable range (based upon the statistics from the past four test administrations). Phase III is a hurdle due to the critical nature of this job function. Phase II is not a hurdle because this part of the job that is being assessed, is important (worthy of being tested and considered), yet not at the level of criticality as Phase III. It also does not have the advantages, as stated above, that a Phase I cut has.

- Q** *If you are not going to z-score until after part 4 why z-score at all? Will it change your raw score and ranking? How likely is it that a person is negatively affected by the "z" score ranking? (i.e. if a person is 10 on the list after all four phases, could the "z" score drop them to 11 or 12. If yes, why z-score?*
- A** Z-scoring is designed to allow different types of phases to be combined into one score. Since the first two hurdles do not require combining of test phases, as in previous lieutenant test administrations, z-scoring is not needed prior to phase IV. However, it is needed in the final calculations of scores due to the need to combine four evenly-weighted test phases to arrive at one final score. Raw scores will not change and rankings will not be calculated or considered until the final list is established, therefore there is no opportunity for change.
- Q** *Chief Butcher stated at a union meeting that we would be z-scored after part 3, Liz stated after part 4, which is correct?*
- A** Perhaps there was a misunderstanding regarding what Chief Butcher said during the union meeting. Z-scoring will occur after Phase IV and only after Phase IV.
- Q** *Will you z-score before or after seniority points?*
- A** Before.
- Q** *Will seniority points be given at the end of the testing process? Would it not be fairer to divide a candidate's seniority points by 4 and apply that number to each phase?*
- A** In accordance with Commission Rules, seniority points will be calculated for only those individuals completing and passing all phases of the exam.
- Q** *Where is the info for determining seniority points?*
- A** This information is included in Civil Service Commission Rule VIII. A. The Commission Rules are available to the public by visiting our website at www.csc.columbus.gov.